United Nations

Press Release

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THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS

♠ Plan to provide long-term economic, social and humanitarian aid to victims of Chernobyl nuclear power plant disaster announced at United Nations Office at Geneva.

♠ Secretary-General receives Special Commission plan for long-term monitoring of Iraqi weapons installations.

♠ Chairman of General Assembly's First Committee welcomes strategic arms reduction agreement between Soviet Union and United States.

♠ China's northeast provinces face new threat of floods from continuous heavy rainfall, recorded at about 238 millimetres or 9.5 inches in some areas.

♠ International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) hands over Iraqi soldiers held captive in northern Iraq; steps up food aid to southern Sudan.

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A plan to provide long-term economic, social and humanitarian aid for victims of the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant in the Soviet Union was announced today in Vienna.

Making the announcement was the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Vienna, Margaret J. Anstee, who is the coordinator for United Nations activities relating to Chernobyl.

Outlining the plan, Miss Anstee said that, as released, the programme will form the basis for the Chernobyl pledging conference, which the Secretary-General is convening in New York on 20 September, in response to a 1990 Assembly resolution requesting him to coordinate a programme of cooperation to alleviate the economic and social consequences of the 1986 disaster.

(more)

For information media—not an official record

Miss Anstee said the plan, which includes profiles of some 140 projects, requests an initial $650 million in pledges from the international community. She added, however, that more feasibility studies would need to be done by potential donors and donor organizations to determine additional needs.

She said the disaster, which occurred five years ago, and which has been called the worst nuclear disaster in human history, showed that there were many lessons to be learned from Chernobyl, among which was how to avoid such an accident ever happening again.

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Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar today received the long-term plan of the Special Commission concerning the monitoring and verification of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction.

A United Nations spokesman said the Secretary-General would review and authorize the plan before passing it on to the Security Council today.

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The Chairman of the Assembly's First Committee (Political and Security), Jai Pratap Rana (Nepal), has welcomed the signing by the Presidents of the United States and the Soviet Union of an agreement on strategic arms reduction.

In a statement issued at Headquarters today, the Chairman called the agreement "a historic contribution to international efforts to achieve general and complete disarmament and a more peaceful and secure world".

He said it was especially significant that, for the first time, the two major nuclear Powers had undertaken to begin actual reductions in their strategic nuclear arsenals. He expressed the hope that the development would lead to further substantial progress in nuclear disarmament efforts.

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China's northeast provinces are facing a new threat of floods as water levels from the tributaries of two major rivers continue to rise following heavy rainfall, recorded at about 238 millimetres, or 9.5 inches in some areas.

A press release from the Chinese Mission to the United Nations reports that more flooding is expected, and that State flood-control officials are urging local authorities to take preventive measures to address the situation.

According to the report, downpours during the past three days have affected eastern regions, including the area's two largest cities, Beijing and Tianjing.

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Donations received to date totalled $32 million from domestic sources. China has appealed to the international community for relief assistance.

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The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) announced that it has taken part in the hand-over of more than 1,000 Iraqi soldiers to Iraqi authorities. The soldiers had been held captive in northern Iraq following clashes in the Sulaimaniya area in mid-July. The ICRC said it provided transportation, food and medical assistance, in cooperation with all the parties involved.

In southern Sudan, ICRC has stepped up its deliveries of food aid to three regions controlled by the opposition. Those operations began on 26 July. The Agency is also continuing its relief flights to other areas.

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